

February 27, 2023

Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Mario J Chiappetti. I am a resident of Simsbury and a member of First Church of Christ in Simsbury. My congregation is a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), a broad-based organization of 49 faith institutions working together on this issue.

I am testifying in support of a rent cap and in support of SB 4, with amendments, to better protect tenants. Specifically, we support:

- A rent cap of no more than 3%.
- Maintenance of existing rents between tenants, so landlords cannot push out tenants to increase rent
- Expansion of good cause eviction protections so tenants have security in their homes and cannot be evicted without any reason.

I support these rental protections not only because it is an economic issue but also because it is a moral issue. While rent control would impact all renters regardless of income level, several empirical studies have found that rent controlled units are disproportionately occupied by those with lower incomes than units that are not covered by rent control. In my written testimony, which you have, I've cited these claims.

How can individuals/families take care of themselves if they are paying more than 30- 50 percent of their income on housing while living under the umbrella of housing instability due to high rent increases and without strong good cause eviction protections?

This is also an economic issue. Employers want and need a stable workforce. If they have employees who drive long distances to work every day or employees who suddenly do not show up or resign due to their respective housing issue, these employers will go elsewhere to find that stable workforce.

There is so much data and research that shows the positive impact of rent stabilization, despite the myths that are being promulgated by those who

fear tenant protections – but the most significant data point for me is my own life story.

I know what it is like to grow up in a stable housing environment due to strong rental protections. My grandmother and her children (including my father) all lived in a rent-controlled apartment building nearly all their lives in New York City. In fact, I still have an aunt and uncle who are in their mid-90's living in this Greenwich Village apartment building where they continue to have access to their neighbors, doctors, and shops. Having the stability of a rent controlled/stabilized apartment, all my cousins and I and many of our neighbors' children were ensured of a stable neighborhood while being able to stay in the same schools as they grew up. They did not have to worry about being evicted and being moved from shelter to shelter or school to school. I was able to learn and live in a stable apartment building with the rest of my extended Italian American family where we all supported one another in many ways through the years. This allowed me to concentrate on my studies and gave me the opportunity to become a first-generation college graduate with a subsequent professional career. I know many people share a similar story. I would like to see this happen a thousand-fold more times with our Connecticut families.

I strongly support SB 4 but with our suggested amendments so that we fulfill our obligations to help and support our fellow residents and so that Connecticut may reach its full potential.

Sincerely,
Mario J. Chiappetti
Simsbury, CT